

# STUDY OF THE ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR OF BUSINESS SCHOOL FACULTY TOWARDS RESEARCH IN INDORE

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## ABSTRACT

*Research and publishing have become increasingly important in Business schools and colleges. The importance of research and publishing is even more apparent in schools which are accredited, or seeking initial accreditation. The reason for this increase is that faculty's research efforts and outcomes enhance their performance in the classroom. But it is a matter of debate whether the business faculty agrees with this idea, and do their attitude towards the usefulness of research in their mission of teaching relate to their behaviors in this area. This study examines the relationship between attitudes toward research, attitudes toward the impact of research on teaching, and research-oriented behaviors among faculty of business management at a few Management Institutes of Indore. A questionnaire was developed to assess faculty attitudes and behaviors relating to research, and was sent to a random sample of business faculties of some Management Institute of Indore. The results show that faculty generally supports the idea that researching and publishing improves teaching, and that attitudes toward the usefulness of research relate positively to both research efforts and to research success.*

*Keywords: Attitude and Behaviour*

## INTRODUCTION

While academic research has historically been an important component of faculty job descriptions at research-focused institutions, accreditation standards for business schools have expanded this focus to include a wider variety of institutions. These standards focus on increasing the number of peer-reviewed journal publications achieved by faculty members during a 5-year window (generally agreed to be two articles at a minimum in that time frame, per Miles, Hazeldine & Munilla, 2004). In its white paper on deploying academically qualified faculty (AACSB 2006, p. 1), AACSB states that faculty should be "active scholars through their research and other development activities that support the maintenance of their intellectual capital in the teaching field."

One of the primary justifications given for this increased emphasis on publications in colleges of business is that research results in more effective teaching, the idea being that faculty members who are actively engaged in research are more likely to remain current in their discipline and that, in turn, results in enhanced teaching effectiveness and student learning (AACSB, 2008). The study examines the relationship between attitudes toward research, attitudes toward the impact of research on teaching, and research-

oriented behaviors among business faculty at Management Institutes of Indore.

## THE IMPACT OF RESEARCH ON TEACHING

The impact of research on teaching has been the focus of a large number of research studies over the past 30 years. One stream of research in this area purports the notion that research and teaching are complementary and mutually supporting (e.g. Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Shils, 1983; Tang & Chamberlain, 1997; Webster, 1986). Braxton (1996), for example, purported that teaching and research involve common and reciprocal values, while Neumann (1992) found that academic administrators believed in the idea of a teaching-research nexus, or, in other words, the idea that teaching and research are interrelated functions through which the process of teaching is enriched by research and that research can be initiated through ideas generated in the classroom. Many academics support the idea that those who are the most active in research also are the most effective teachers (Hattie & Marsh, 1996). It is often argued that those faculties who are research active are more likely to be up-to-date in discipline-specific knowledge and can use their research findings in preparing teaching materials (Marsh & Hattie, 2002). Rowland (2002) claimed that good researchers can make good teachers through their love of the subject area and a passion for contributing to that knowledge. Faculty who are

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active researchers are perceived to be more passionate about what they teach which translates into a heightened sense of excitement and engagement among students (Coates, Barnett & Williams, 2001). Students also appear to value faculty research. Lindsay, Breen and Jenkins (2002) found that college students' perceptions of a faculty member's knowledge currency, credibility and enthusiasm were enhanced through that faculty member's research activities. Although the idea that research enhances teaching is popular, there is little empirical evidence to support this claim (Gibbs, 1995).

The long-held assumption that good researchers are also good teachers has been described as a myth of higher education (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994). In fact, some research has found the opposite relationship: faculty placing more emphasis on research tends to put less emphasis on teaching (Allman 1988; Marsh & Hattie, 2002). This view reflects the notion that research and teaching are not complementary functions but, rather, at odds with each other as they compete for a faculty member's time, attention and efforts (Ladd, 1979) and create a source of "constant tension" (Light, 1974, p. 8). According to Fox (1992, p. 293), "research and teaching are conflicting roles with a different set of expectations and obligations." Past research has also determined that the amount of time spent on research is negatively related to the amount of time spent on teaching (Fox, 1992; Olsen & Simmons, 1996).

## **RELATING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR**

In any study relating attitude and behavior, it is important to have an understanding of the theoretical relationship between the variables. Behavior can be viewed as affected by, or a result of attitude, but it is important to note that behavior can also influence attitude. In conducting a study of faculty attitudes about research and its impact on student learning, this relationship becomes particularly relevant; given that the behavior of publishing is often a required behavior.

Literature defines "attitude" as a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), and a long tradition of research has examined ways in which attitudes influence subsequent behavior (Glasman & Albarracin, 2006). Classic attitude models

examine how personal and environmental factors influence the effects of attitudes on behavior, but generally support the idea that attitudes do indeed affect behavior. The Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) states that behavioral intentions are a function of both attitudes toward the behavior as well as subjective norms regarding the performance of the behavior. Subjective norms refer to the views of significant others in terms of performing the behavior (such as colleagues and their opinions on academic research productivity), and are believed to exert influence on behavioral intentions independent of attitude. Thus, it would be possible for a faculty member to feel unfavorably towards conducting research in general, but to be motivated to do so nonetheless because it is the socially desirable and normatively appropriate behavior within his/her department or college.

The revised version of the Theory of Reasoned Action was proposed by Ajzen (1985) as the Theory of Planned Behavior, which added the additional element of 'perceived behavioral control' in terms of influence on behavioral intentions. If a faculty member is not confident that his/her efforts will be successful (i.e., the time spent on research might not result in a publication, there are not adequate resources to support research efforts etc.), then that would negatively impact behavioral intentions toward research. Wallace, Paulson, Lord, and Bond (2005) likewise found that situational constraints such as perceived social pressure and perceived difficulty weakened the relationship between attitude and behavior. While various models of the attitude-behavior relationship may suggest different processes to explain how these two constructs influence each other, there is a general consensus that attitudes serve to influence future behavior (Glasman & Albarracin, 2006). Ross (1989) found that people have a tendency to reconstruct their past behavior to be consistent with their current attitudes. In terms of faculty, this might imply that people who feel strongly about the benefits of research might raise the amount of time they report having spent on research.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In the current research, we draw from the attitude/behavior models and examine how a faculty member's attitude towards the value of research in their teaching might affect their research-related behavior. We deviate slightly

from the approach of classic attitude models, because those models typically use attitude towards a specifically defined behavior as a predictor of that behavior. In the current study, we have chosen to examine faculty members' attitudes toward research as it relates to the mission of teaching, rather than only measuring attitude toward research in isolation. This essentially taps into the usefulness of research as related to teaching in the eyes of faculty. Thus, we are extending the application of attitude models to predict how a faculty member's attitude about the role of research is related to the faculty member's efforts in that area. The focus of this research centers on the following question:

1. Is there a positive relationship between research and teaching?

## METHODOLOGY

A survey was developed to gather data about: (1) attitudes toward teaching, research, and the impact of research on teaching; (2) time spent on teaching and research. The questionnaire was distributed to 150 faculty members at different Business School in Indore. The Respective Schools were randomly selected from the internet and e-mail addresses for the randomly selected faculty were pulled from their university's web site. An e-mail, with a link to the online questionnaire, was sent to each faculty member selected requesting their participation. Of the 100 faculty members originally emailed, 14 were undeliverable and 10 e-mails were blocked. This resulted in a final sample size of 226 Business School faculty. A total of 180 faculty responded to the survey. This resulted in a 79.6% response rate which was as high as desired. The survey respondents represented all of the major business disciplines. The largest percentage of the respondents was Marketing (21.5%) and Management (15.7%) faculty. An additional one-eighth of the respondents were from the Finance discipline (14.5%), while 10.8% were Information Systems/MIS faculty and 11.3% were in Accounting. Economics was mentioned by 5.9% of the respondents with an additional 6.6% in Operations and 5.6% in Business Law. Of the remaining respondents, 4.4% identified other business areas (to include Business Communication, Ethics, and Entrepreneurship) while 3.7% did not provide their business discipline area.

Of the majority of faculty surveyed, 89.9%, stated they were at an institution with a master's program in business. An additional 5.1 % were in a business college that offered a doctoral degree. Only 5% of those responding indicated they worked in a business school that only offered a bachelor degree.

Respondents were asked about how they divided their time as well as their research productivity. During a typical week, the faculty surveyed spent an average of 9.51 hours preparing for class, 8.48 hours in the classroom, 9.70 hours on the follow-up from teaching (such as grading, talking with students, etc.), 8.30 hours in administrative activities and 9.69 working on research. A more detailed breakdown of the time faculty spends on these activities is depicted in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Faculty Time Expenditure**

Hours per week spent on	5 Hours or less	6 -10 Hours	More than 10 Hours
Preparing for Class	26.40%	49.30%	24.30%
Classroom Instruction	9.70%	32.40%	66.90%
Administrative Activities	33.00%	46.80%	24.20%
Research	51.50%	28.20%	20.30%

## RESULTS

### 1. Attitudes toward Research and its Impact on Teaching

Faculties were asked their level of agreement or disagreement with a variety of statements related to their attitudes toward research and its impact on teaching. As past research has shown, many faculties firmly believe that their research positively impacts their teaching. A correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between this belief and the effectiveness of this research on their teaching (see Table 2), which focused on faculty responses to the statement "By researching and publishing I am a better teacher." The mean response to this statement was a 3.57, and 62% of the sample agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (with 18% remaining neutral). Thus, the majority of faculty subjects do indeed feel that conducting research makes them better in the classroom.

**Table 2**  
**Relationship between Research Attitude and Teaching**

<b>Relationship between Attitudes toward Research and Teaching</b>			
<b>Statements</b>	<b>Correlation with statement: "By researching and publishing, I am a better teacher"</b>		
	<b>Mean(Std Dev)</b>	<b>Correlation Coefficient</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Teaching and research are mutually supportive activities	3.57 (1.14)	0.621	**
Teaching interferes with my research productivity	3.41 (1.22)	-0.05	NS
I regularly use published research from academic journals when preparing my lectures	2.81 (1.27)	0.55	**
My students are generally aware of my current research projects	2.71 (1.14)	0.273	**
Business students educational experience is enhanced by the research activities of their professors	3.54 (1.06)	0.643	**
Securing publications in prestigious academic journals contributes more to teaching excellence	2.20 (1.08)	0.449	**
The most highly rated professors, by students, are those who are the most prolific publishers	2.15 (1.09)	0.356	**
Students would not be as well prepared, to enter the business world if their professors did not publish in academic journals	2.66 (1.24)	0.556	**
Students appreciate my contributions towards academic discipline resulting from my publications	2.21 (1.07)	0.179	0
Research offers the greatest professional satisfaction	2.77 (1.21)	0.288	**
Business School Faculty view themselves primarily as researchers	2.84 (.94)	0.117	NS
For most Business School faculty, the primary reason for conducting research is to secure a publication rather than advance the body of knowledge	3.93 (1.03)	-0.086	NS
The reward structure influences faculty members to devote their time and effort to research	3.50 (1.26)	0.055	NS
I am expected to publish on a regular basis in order to advance in my career	4.36 (.85)	0.223	**
I truly enjoy the research and publishing activity	3.40 (1.26)	0.323	**
By researching and publishing I am a better teacher.	3.57 (1.18)	0.185	0

\*\* = statistically significant at the .01 level

\* = statistically significant at the .05 level

NS = not statistically significant

While all but one of the attitudes measured were significantly correlated with the notion that faculty perceive themselves to be a better teacher due to their research and publishing, four of the items were highly correlated. There was a strong and positive correlation with the statements "business students educational experience is enhanced by the research activities of their professors" ( $r = .683$ ), "teaching and research are mutually supportive activities" ( $r = .621$ ), "students would not be as well prepared, academically, to enter the business world if their professors did not publish in academic journals"

( $r = .556$ ), and "I regularly use published research from academic journals or conference proceedings when preparing for my classes" ( $r = .550$ ). These results seem to indicate that teaching and student learning are perceived to be positively enhanced by a faculty member's research.

There was a moderate and significant positive correlation between the perception that faculty are better teachers because of research and publishing. Also significantly and positively related was the thought that faculty who are most

highly evaluated by students are also the most prolific publishers ( $r = .356$ ). This seems to indicate not only that faculty perceive research and publishing to have a beneficial effect on teaching but that teaching is significantly augmented by the quality and quantity of publications.

Positive correlations occurred between the beneficial impact of research on teaching and students appreciation for ( $r = .323$ ) and awareness of ( $r = .273$ ) a faculty member's research activities and contributions.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In general, faculty members do believe that researching and publishing make them better teachers. That belief, in turn, is related to a variety of attitudes that essentially embrace research as being mutually supportive with teaching and also as enhancing the educational experience of students. There are also significant relationships between these positive research/teaching attitudes and faculty members' successful research outcomes. Those outcomes, as indicated by journal publications, were significantly related to faculty effort dedicated to research.

Do the positive relationships we find between attitudes, effort, and outcomes indicate that positive evaluations of the benefits of research in the classroom are driving faculty contributions in that area?

Alternatively, could they indicate that department or college cultures which demand faculty success in research are in fact contributing to related faculty attitudes? This brings to mind the time-honored question of which came first, the chicken or the egg? Do research-related attitudes influence behavior, or do research related behaviors influence attitudes? Unlike in the chicken and the egg scenario, the answer in this case could be both. While we did not measure culture by department, it is reasonable to expect that all faculty at accredited Business Schools feel some degree of pressure to remain research active. Drawing from popular attitude models such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, we might conclude that the attitudes we measured serve as antecedents to subsequent research efforts and publishing.

However, the self-perception stream of research would also suggest that behaviors that occur

because of job requirements (i.e., pressures to publish) will in fact influence attitude formation after the fact, and may even bias the attitude that a faculty member retrieves from memory.

While Ross (1989) might predict faculty members to "reconstruct" past behavior to fit current attitudes, we saw no evidence of that in our sample. If faculty members were exaggerating their research behaviors to fit current attitudes (and normative expectations) toward research, then we would not expect to find a significant relationship between reported research efforts and actual research success. It is also possible that while college/department demands create the initial motivation for research productivity, faculty members ultimately appreciate the benefits to their teaching of such intellectual pursuits. Such a circular effect is consistent with previous research relating attitudes and behaviors. It is not surprising that faculty who are successful with a desired behavior will have more positive attitudes in terms of the merits of the behavior. Thus, it seems reasonable that a department or college wanting to shift toward a more research-active culture (as dictated by the increasing requirements for accreditation), might be able to successfully influence faculty attitudes toward the usefulness of research by essentially providing the best possible environment for faculty success in this area. Giving faculty adequate time to devote to research activities, and also providing adequate resources to improve the chances of success for those efforts should, in turn, lead to increased faculty support for the change of culture.

A limitation of the current study is that it relies solely on self-report measures as provided by faculty. As mentioned, there is a possibility that faculty could inflate their reports of research efforts, but we did not see evidence of this. It appears that the somewhat subjective faculty self-report measures of the time they devote to research (as measured by hours spent per week on research) are supported by more objective outcome measures of publications. Future research endeavors could more closely examine the interplay between attitudes, efforts, and behaviors by developing and testing a structural model. Specifically, it would be interesting to determine if attitudes leave an impact on behavior or if the behavior ultimately shapes the attitude. It would also prove useful to incorporate a more quantitative determination of how research is incorporated into a faculty member's teaching.

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